

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ONY-00 ES-01 /011 W
----- 053840
R 100720Z SEP 76
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9364

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 SEOUL 7192

EA ONLY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS KS US
SUBJ: REPORT TO CONGRESS UNDER SECTION 688 OF THE FOREIGN
ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1961, AS AMENDED

REF: STATE 172409

WE RECOGNIZE THAT THE DEPARTMENT IS PLANNING TO DRAFT ANSWER TO PART III OF REPORT TO CONGRESS. WE ARE SUBMITTING HERewith COMMENTS THAT MIGHT BE HELPFUL. 1. WE RECOMMEND THAT THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH TAKE A STRONG POSITION AGAINST THE IMPLIED ASSUMPTION THAT LIES BEHIND THE CONGRESSIONAL REQUEST FOR, "REPORTS ON THE PROSPECTS FOR OR IMPLEMENTATION OF PHASED REDUCTION OF UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES ASSIGNED TO DUTY IN THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA, IN COORDINATION WITH THE TIMETABLE OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA FOR MILITARY SELF-SUFFICIENCY." THIS STATEMENT SUGGESTS THAT THE MAJOR CRITERION AGAINST WHICH JUDGMENTS CONCERNING US TROOP WITHDRAWAL SHOULD BE MADE IS THE RATE OF UPGRADE OF ROK MILITARY CAPABILITIES. WE SUGGEST THAT THIS IS ONLY ONE ELEMENT WHOSE SIGNIFICANCE MUST BE BALANCED AGAINST OTHER SIGNIFICANT, IF NOT MORE IMPORTANT, FACTORS.

2. US MILITARY FORCES ARE DEPLOYED ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA FOR THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF DETERRING AGGRESSION AND ONLY SECONDARILY FOR WAR FIGHTING, IF DETERRENCE FAILS. THESE MISSION PRIORITIES MUST BE KEPT IN MIND IN ANY CONSIDERATION OF THE TIMING AND SCOPE OF DRAW DOWN OF US FORCES. EVEN TODAY, THE 2ND INFANTRY DIVISION ONLY MODESTLY AUGMENTS THE WAR FIGHTING CAPABILITIES OF THE

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UNITED NATIONS COMMAND; IT IS BUT ONE (ALTHOUGH CLEARLY THE

BEST) OF 23 GROUND COMBAT DIVISIONS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE 2ND DIVISION IS A VITAL ELEMENT OF OUR DETERRENT POSTURE. IT IS THE REAL EARNEST OF THE US COMMITMENT TO THE DEFENSE OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA. ITS PRESENCE HERE IMBUES SOUTH KOREA WITH CONFIDENCE; AND, CONVERSELY, NORTH KOREA MUST CALCULATE THAT IT WOULD HAVE TO CONTEND NOT ONLY WITH ONE US DIVISION, LOCATED JUST SOUTH OF THE DMZ, BUT THE ENTIRE CONTINUUM OF US MILITARY POWER, TRIGGERED BY AND SUPPORTIVE OF THAT DIVISION, IF EMBATTLED.

3. WE LIVE HERE WITH AN INTERESTING DICHOTOMY: ON THE ONE HAND, THE US' MAJOR CONTRIBUTION, IF THERE SHOULD BE AN UNFORTUNATE OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES, WILL BE IN THE PROVISION OF STAND-OFF FIRE POWER (I.E. AIRPLANES, MISSILES AND ARTILLERY). ON THE OTHER HAND, THE MOST EFFECTIVE DETERRENT IS THE FOOT-SOLDIER, FOR IT IS HIS INVOLVEMENT IN KOREA IN WHAT WILL BE PRIMARILY A LAND-WAR WHICH WILL DETERMINE THE EXTENT OF US PARTICIPATION. THEREFORE, THE GREATER RISK MAY WELL BE A PARTIAL WITHDRAWAL OF US FORCES IN A MANNER WHICH LEAVES AN AREA OF AMBIGUITY ABOUT OUR WILL TO DEFEND THE SOUTH. THIS AMBIGUITY MAY TEMPT A NORTH KOREAN ATTACK. A NORTH KOREAN ATTACK WOULD LEAVE US WITH A CHOICE OF RAPID REDEPLOYMENT OR TOTAL WITHDRAWAL. THUS THE DILEMMA OF US MILITARY PRESENCE IS THAT THE LOWER THE THRESHOLD OF US INVOLVEMENT, THE GREATER THE RISK THAT A NORTH KOREAN ATTACK MIGHT OCCUR.

4. THERE ARE BOTH MILITARY AND POLITICAL DIMENSIONS TO A DETERRENT POSTURE. THE MILITARY DIMENSION CONSISTS PRINCIPALLY (BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY) OF THE ROK/US FORCES DEPLOYED ON THIS PENINSULA. IN THIS CONTEXT, THE ROK/US FORCE MIX CAN CHANGE SO LONG AS THE SUM OF CAPABILITIES IS UNCHANGED. THUS THE PROGRAM TO TRANSFER, OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS, THE BULK OF US MANNED AIR DEFENSE ARTILLERY AND MEDIUM RANGE MISSILES TO THE ROKS, WITH A CORRESPONDING REDUCTION IN US STRENGTH. THESE PARTICULAR CHANGES ARE WRITTEN INTO THE ROK FORCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN. ON THE OTHER HAND, ONE WILL LOOK IN VAIN TO FIND AN ADDITIONAL DIVISION PROGRAMMED IN THE FIP TO REPLACE THE US 2ND DIVISION. THIS IS NOT AN OMISSION. THE ROK ARMY ALREADY HAS ENOUGH DIVISION TO DEFEND AGAINST A NORTH KOREAN ONLY ATTACK. AND AN ADDITIONAL ROK DIVISION--OR EVEN SEVERAL SUCH DIVISIONS--COULD NOT ASSUME THE POLITICAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL COMPONENTS OF THE US 2ND DIVISION'S

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DETERRENT ROLE.

5. ALL THIS ADDS UP TO THE FACT THAT THERE IS LITTLE IN THE ROK FORCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN WHICH WILL SPAWN CAPABILITIES TO REPLACE US FORCE ELEMENTS ON A ONE-FOR-ONE BASIS. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THE CURRENT US FORCE STRUCTURE IN KOREA IS IMMUTABLE. BUT IT DOES MEAN THAT WE MUST FIND OTHER CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING THE OVERALL PACE AND SCOPE OF DRAWDOWN OF US FORCES. AND THESE

CRITERIA WILL BE ESSENTIALLY POLITICAL: THE UPSHOT OF THE US SUPPORTED FOUR POWER CONFERENCE ON KOREA; A NEW ORDER OF NORTH/SOUTH RELATIONSHIPS; OR THE QUID PRO QUO FOR GREAT POWER GUARANTEES WITH RESPECT TO THE KOREAN PENINSULA--TO SUGGEST A FEW. PENDING SUCH FAVORABLE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS, ANY SUBSTANTIAL WITHDRAWAL OF FORCES--AND PARTICULARLY OF THE 2ND DIVISION--WOULD CREATE AN AURA OF AMBIGUITY ABOUT US WILL TO DEFEND THE ROK AND THUS ERODE THE FRAMEWORK WHICH DETERS NORTH KOREAN ATTACK.

6. MOREOVER, WE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT US MILITARY FORCES PARTICULARLY GROUND FORCES IN KOREA HAVE VALUE BEYOND PENINSULAR DETERRENCE. US TROOP PRESENCE IS ALSO EARNEST OF OUR COMMITMENT TO THE MAINTENANCE OF A POWER BALANCE IN NORTHEAST ASIA; OF OUR SECURITY UNDERTAKINGS VIS-A-VIS JAPAN; AND OF OUR INTEREST AND INFLUENCE IN FAR EAST AFFAIRS, GENERALLY. ALSO, OUR PRESENCE IN KOREA IS UNDOUBTEDLY AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN OUR DIALOGUE WITH THE PRC, AS WELL AS A VITAL LINK IN OUR WORLDWIDE STRATEGY. THE 42,000 US TROOPS IN KOREA ARE A VERY BIG CHIP THAT CAN ONLY BE PLAYED ONCE.

7. FURTHERMORE, A QUESTION MUST BE RAISED WHETHER THE US SHOULD VOLUNTARILY WITHDRAW ALL OF PART OF ITS GROUND FORCES WITHOUT EXTRACTING SOME BENEFITS FROM NORTH KOREA.

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8. IF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH FEELS IT MUST PROVIDE A PLAN FOR PHASED WITHDRAWAL, WE SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING THOUGHTS: AS STATED ABOVE, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE US GROUND

FORCES ARE MILITARILY ESSENTIAL, EVEN NOW, TO THE DEFENSE OF SOUTH KOREA. THIS STATEMENT HAS TO BE SOMEWHAT ATTENUATED SINCE THERE STILL EXIST MAJOR DEFICIENCIES IN ROK CAPABILITIES IN SUCH AREAS AS COMMUNICATIONS, COMMAND AND CONTROL AND ANTI-AIRCRAFT DEFENSIVE SYSTEMS. THE US COULD AND SHOULD EXPEDITE ITS EFFORTS TO INCREASE ROK CAPABILITIES IN THESE AREAS. IN THIS CONTEXT, WE WOULD PROPOSE:

A. FIRST, GRADUAL REDUCTION PERHAPS ON STEPPED-UP TIME TABLE OF SUPPORTING UNITS (HAWK/HERCULES, MISSILE COMMAND, ETC) AS ROK IS COMPETENT TO HANDLE;

B. SECOND, IF WE WISH TO EQUATE ROK INCREASED SELF-SUFFICIENCY WITH US WITHDRAWAL OF OTHER GROUND FORCES, PRINCIPALLY 2ND DIVISION ELEMENT, THEN EARLY DISCUSSIONS WITH ROK, JAPAN, USSR, PRC AND OTHER EAST ASIAN COUNTRIES MUST BE INITIATED AS THE FIRST PHASE OF THE WITHDRAWAL, LEST THERE BE ANY MISUNDERSTANDINGS OF US INTENTIONS AND WILL.

9. SINCE WE GENERALLY PERCEIVE THE 2ND DIVISION AS BASICALLY A PSYCHOLOGICAL DETERRENT, ITS REDUCTION NEEDS TO BE VIEWED IN THAT FRAME. "CINCUNC IS ADAMANT THAT
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THE 2ND DIVISION CONTINUE TO BE DEPLOYED IN KOREA FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE BECAUSE A DIVISION IS RECOGNIZED, AROUND THE WORLD, AS THE BASIC UNIT OF GROUND COMBAT POWER. HE DOES POINT OUT, HOWEVER, THAT A DIVISION CAN HAVE VARYING NUMBERS OF BRIGADES AND BATTALIONS." OTHERS HAVE SUGGESTED THAT A REINFORCED BRIGADE WOULD BE SUFFICIENT. CONSIDERATION COULD ALSO BE GIVEN TO TRANSFERRING AN ELEMENT OF THE OKINAWA MARINE DIVISIONS TO KOREA IN LIEU OF THE 2ND DIVISION. IT IS CERTAINLY PREMATURE AT THIS STAGE TO BECOME CONCERNED WITH DETAILS OF THIS NATURE, BUT WE DO BELIEVE IT IMPORTANT THAT THE PRINCIPLE OF DETERRENCE BE MAINTAINED AND THAT OUR FRIENDS AND FOES ALIKE FULLY UNDERSTAND OUR INTENTIONS AND DIRECTION. IT WOULD WELL BE THAT IN THE TRANSITION PERIOD, IF US COMBAT GROUND FORCES ARE TO BE WITHDRAWN, OUR AIR POWER IN KOREA SHOULD BE EXPANDED AS A CLEAR SIGNAL OF OUR PURPOSE.

10. FOR ALL THESE REASONS, WE BELIEVE IT IMPORTANT THAT THE UNDERLYING ASSUMPTION OF THE CONGRESSIONAL REQUEST SHOULD BE EXPLICITLY CONFRONTED AND REJECTED. CONCOMITANTLY, WE SHOULD REJECT THE ARGUMENT THAT THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF THE 2ND DIVISION GUARANTEES US INVOLVEMENT, ON THE GROUND, IN A LAND WAR IN ASIA. OUR COUNTER ARGU-

MENT IS THAT, IF HOSTILITIES AGAIN ERUPT ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA, THE US CONTRIBUTION WOULD BE AIR POWER, LAND AND CARRIER BASED; WE DO NOT ANTICIPATE THE COMMITMENT OF EVEN THE 2ND DIVISION, LET ALONE REINFORCING DIVISIONS. IN ANY CASE, THIS PUTS THE HORSE BEFORE THE CAR. THE ENTIRE THRUST OF US POLICY IS TO PREVENT WAR; AND SUPPORT OF THAT POLICY IS THE ENTIRE RAISON D'ETRE OF THE 2ND DIVISION DEPLOYMENT. TO BE SURE, THERE IS ALWAYS THE RISK THAT THE DETERRENT MAY FAIL. BUT THE GREATER RISK TO THE US AND ITS ALLIES--IS A NORTH KOREAN ATTACK. AND IT WOULD BE A TRAGEDY IF SUCH AN ATTACK EVENTUATED BECAUSE UNCOMPENSATED US WITHDRAWALS INDUCED NORTH KOREA TO MISCALCULATE THE DEGREE OF US COMMITMENT TO THE DEFENSE OF THE ROK.

11. FINALLY, THE PRESENCE OF THE 2ND DIVISION CANNOT BE MEASURED IN TERMS OF ROK SELF-SUFFICIENCY SINCE OUR
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PRESENCE IS IMPORTANT TO THE US NOT ONLY AS A SYMBOL OF OUR DETERMINATION TO REMAIN A FAR EAST POWER, BUT ALSO AS PART OF OUR GLOBAL STRATEGY. IF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH WOULD WISH TO GO FURTHER THAN THAT, WE WOULD SUGGEST THAT THE DRAFT RESPONSE BE DISCUSSED WITH THE ROK AND JAPAN AT LEAST BEFORE RELEASE TO CONGRESS.

12. NOTE: GENERAL STILWELL REVIEWED EMBASSY'S DRAFT AND SUGGESTED SEVERAL CHANGES, WHICH ARE INCORPORATED IN THIS SUBMISSION. SINCE AMBASSADOR SNEIDER HAS NOT APPROVED THESE REVISION, WE WOULD APPRECIATE IT IF HE COULD BE SHOWN NEW TEXT WHEN HE ARRIVES FOR CONSULTATION ON SEPTEMBER 13. GENERAL STILWELL BELIEVES THAT NO MENTION SHOULD BE MADE OF PHASED WITHDRAWAL IN THE REPORT FOR CONGRESS FOR FOLLOWING REASONS (HE WOULD DELETE PARAGRAPHS 8 AND 9):

"A. THE BASIC THRUST OF THE DRAFT MESSAGE IS THAT IT IS TOO EARLY TO PROVIDE SUCH PLAN BECAUSE THE CONDITIONS WHICH WOULD MAKE MAJOR WITHDRAWALS POSSIBLES ARE NOT YET DISCERNIBLE.

"B. ANY SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE IN THE US FORCE PRESENCE IN KOREA WILL INVOLVE THE 2ND INFANTRY DIVISION, SINCE VIRTUALLY EVERY OTHER ELEMENT OF THE STRUCTURE IS LINKED, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, TO THAT UNIT. THE TWO NOTABLE EXCEPTIONS ARE THE 38TH AIR DEFENSE ARTILLERY BRIGADE AND THE 4TH MISSILE COMMAND.

"C. THE ARMY POM, SUPPORTED BY DOD, SPECIFICALLY CARRIES THE 2ND DIVISION, AS NOW CONSTITUTED, DEPLOYED IN KOREA

THROUGH 1980.

"D. STATE SHOULD NOT UNILATERALLY SUGGEST THAT CONFIGURATION OF 2ND DIVISION MIGHT BE CHANGED. THIS KIND OF INITIATIVE SHOULD STEM FROM DOD, WHEN AND IF APPROPRIATE.

"E. AS YOU KNOW, WE ARE PROGRAMMED TO PHASE OUT THE 38TH ADA BRIGADE, SAVING ABOUT 2500 SPACES. THE INACTIVATION OF THE 4TH MISSILE COMMAND WILL SAVE SOME MORE. THAT SHOULD BE ENOUGH FOR THE 'FIRST FIGHT' TO THE CONGRESS."

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: US CONGRESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS, MILITARY CAPABILITIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: izenbei0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976SEOUL07192
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760342-0047
From: SEOUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760972/aaaacjrb.tel
Line Count: 294
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Reference: 76 STATE 172409
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: izenbei0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <28 MAY 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <27 SEP 2004 by izenbei0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REPORT TO CONGRESS UNDER SECTION 688 OF THE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1961, AS AMENDED
TAGS: MASS, KS, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006